

Mini Lesson 7: Take Out Doubles

Lesson Given by Roger Melaas

Definition: A **takeout double** is made after an opponent opens. At the one level, the double typically indicates an opening hand with support for the unbid suits. The double requests that partner name an unbid suit.

Responses. There are five basic responses from the partner of the player who doubled:

1. **Pass.** You would do this **only** if you have a “stack” of the bid suit (five +), and have a very good chance of setting the opponents. One measure of a “stack” is called the rule of 9. If the level bid + the number of cards in the trump suit + the number of honors in the trump suit add up to 9, you have a stack!

Example: Left hand opponent (LHO) opens 1♣, partner doubles, and the next player passes. You hold:

♠ K 7 2 ♥ 8 5 ♦ 6 5 ♣ K Q 8 7 6 4 (1 + 6 + 2).

Pass. The opener is in a bind with perhaps a 3 or 4 card club suit, and no idea where to run!

2. **Make a minimum suit bid with 0-8 high card points.**

Example: LHO bids 1♦, partner doubles, and the next player passes. You have:

♠ K 9 7 2 ♥ 8 5 ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ Q 8 7 4

Bid one spade. Even with zero points, you should bid your best longest suit. You are not promising any values; you are only promising you have 13 cards!

3. **Bid 1NT** with 9-11 HCP, ideally a double stopper in the opponent’s suit, and typically no 4-card major to bid.

Example: LHO opens 1♣, partner doubles, and the next player passes. You hold:

♠ K 8 7 ♥ Q 8 2 ♦ 6 4 2 ♣ A J 7 4

You bid 1NT to show your point count, stoppers in the opponent’s suit, and lack of a long alternative suit.

4. **Jump in another suit** (ideally a major), with 9-11 HCPs and a 4+ card major.

Example: LHO opens 1♣, partner doubles, and the next player passes. You hold:

♠ K 9 7 4 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A J 5 2 ♣ 8 7 6

Bid 2♠. This invites partner to go to game with extra points and spade support. You would like to have a 5-card suit, but bid it even with 4!

5. **Cuebid the opponent's suit** with 12+ points. With your partner's opener, you have enough for game. This shows it; now let's find out where.

Example: LHO opens 1♣, partner doubles, and next player passes. You hold:

♠ A K 9 4 ♥ Q 5 ♦ K 5 2 ♣ J T 7 6

Bid 2♣ to show your points. If partner then bids 2♠, raise to 4♠. If partner bids ♥s or ♦s, you can bid 3NT.

Test Your Responses to a Takeout Double

In each case, suppose your LHO opens 1♣, partner doubles, and next player passes. What do you bid?

1. ♠ A Q 9 3 ♥ K 5 2 ♦ K T 6 4 ♣ T 6
2. ♠ J 9 3 ♥ Q 4 2 ♦ 10 7 6 4 ♣ T 8 7
3. ♠ A 3 ♥ 8 5 2 ♦ K Q J 6 4 ♣ 9 7 4
4. ♠ Q 9 3 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ K 10 6 4 ♣ K Q 8
5. ♠ A J T 9 3 ♥ Q 5 2 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ 8 4
6. ♠ Q J 9 3 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ K 7 6 4 ♣ T 6
7. ♠ Q 9 2 ♥ J 5 2 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ K J 6 4 3 2

Answer Key:

1. 2♣
2. 1♦ (no matter how bad your hand is, you need to bid)
3. 2♦
4. 1NT
5. 1♠
6. 2♠
7. Pass